



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Race to the Top Plan Gets Green Light from U.S. Department of Education**

The U.S. Department of Education has approved the Rhode Island plan for using the \$75-million federal Race to the Top grant that the state won last year.

With this federal approval, the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) can move forward with the ambitious four-year strategic plan to transform education in Rhode Island.

“I am pleased that the U.S. Department of Education has recognized that RIDE and all of our school districts have worked diligently to develop excellent plans to put Race to the Top funds into action,” said George D. Caruolo, Esq., Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. “I am confident that educators across the state are ready to take on the hard work of making our schools the best in America, and this grant will support them in that work.”

“We at RIDE are honored that the U.S. Department of Education has recognized our strategic plan for transforming education as one of the best in the country and has awarded us \$75 million to improve our schools,” said Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “With this approval, we will continue to move forward with urgency and dedication to make sure we have excellent teachers in every classroom, excellent leaders in every school, and a world-class education for every student in Rhode Island.”

In letters sent on Friday, April 8, the U.S. Department of Education approved the budgets and “scope of work” documents from the state and from all Rhode Island districts, which describe in detail what work the grant will finance. RIDE and the U.S. Department of Education will post these documents on the department Web sites.

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>  
<http://www.ride.ri.gov/commissioner/RaceToTheTop/default.aspx>

“We approve the State scope of work and the format of the LEA scopes of work; they include specific goals, activities, timelines, and budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures,” wrote Ann Whalen, Deputy Director, Implementation and Support Unit, in her approval letters. “I am confident that Rhode Island will continue its bold, comprehensive reform efforts.”

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“This is great news: Rhode Island is moving onward and upward,” said Colleen B. Jermain, president of the R.I. School Superintendents’ Association, and Neil Steinberg, president & CEO of the Rhode Island Foundation, in a joint statement. “Together with everyone’s continued leadership and support, Rhode Island schools and districts will become the best educational institutes ever, with opportunities and access to allow all Rhode Island children to reach their full potential. Our steering committee, composed of legislators, business leaders, students, teachers, administrators, parents, union leaders, and community members, will continue to work with RIDE, schools, and districts to provide support, oversight, and leadership to truly make this everyone’s success. Congratulations to everyone for their hard work.” Jermain and Steinberg are the co-chairs of the Rhode Island Race to the Top Steering Committee.

Rhode Island will use Race to the Top funds to develop:

- world-class standards and assessments;
- user-friendly data systems to improve instruction;
- mentoring and training for all teachers and school leaders;
- educator-evaluation systems to improve teacher effectiveness; and
- systems of support for the lowest-achieving schools.

Among the specific initiatives that Race to the Top funds will support are:

- training for educators regarding new world-class standards;
- training in the use of data to improve instruction;
- support for a new system that will track education data over multiple years;
- information for teachers and families on student growth and achievement at the classroom, school, and district levels;
- data and other support for an educator-evaluation system that RIDE will design in partnership with educators;
- support toward developing new models of teacher compensation;
- stronger induction programs for new teachers and school leaders;
- training in the management of human resources;
- development of a deeper applicant pool for subjects that are hard to staff;
- increased supports for principals and teacher leaders; and
- partnerships with professional organizations that have proven records of success.

Based on preliminary budget approval, Rhode Island has spent about \$424,000 to date on the initial stages of work under Race to the Top.

The first two initiatives that Race to the Top funds will support are:

- training for educators regarding new Common Core State Standards, which define what students need to know and be able to do at each grade level; and
- training regarding the implementation of the new educator-evaluation system, under which all teachers and school leaders will receive annual evaluations based primarily on evidence of student growth and academic achievement.

For further information, see:

[An overview of Rhode Island’s Race to the Top](#)  
[Rhode Island’s Race to the Top budget overview](#)

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